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ABSTRACT

To understand the demands and restrictions of human consciousness will allow teachers and students alike to actually "be" listeners. It is speculated (by K. Wilber, E. Neumann, J. Gebser and others) that human consciousness, in the course of human existence, has gone through several changes, different modes or structures, so to speak, lasting thousands of years. Gebser has delineated five structures of consciousness: Archaic, Magical, Mythical, Mental/Rational, and Arational/Integral. With each of these structures or consciousness comes a system of communication suited to the needs of the consciousness. Presently, humankind is once again in transition, in the throes of a shift from mental/rational to arational/integral consciousness. This shift can be seen in the art of the Impressionists and the aperspectival art of Cubism. Physicists discuss relativity and chaos. Philosophers have developed the premises of phenomenology. Music is being restructured in the atonal style of Hindemith and Stravinsky. Listening is taught as a focus of communication studies and customer service. This new stage of consciousness will require the individual to think and speak in some way other than dichotomously. It will require seeking the similarities in others and, as a result, diversity, not differences. The purpose of communication will be to connect with (not control) others and find the agreement and harmony in varied perspectives. What this means, more specifically, for the task of listening is that it will become increasingly important in a climate that emphasizes connection between people rather than competition. Education will focus on intrapersonal processes, learning to trust intuition, and teaching students a non-judgmental attitude. (Contains a table showing the structures of consciousness and communication and seven references.) (TB)

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CONSCIOUSNESS AND LISTENING

Listening is often a frustrating and difficult subject to teach. Students are given tools necessary to do the task well; they go through all the motions, but when the course is complete they often are not better listeners. They are taught ***about*** listening but not ***to*** listen. This is not a failing of course offerings, teachers, or students. Its cause is found in the very roots of the communication process, in the consciousness from which communication springs. It is found in a human consciousness paradigm not designed for listening. To understand the demands and restrictions of human consciousness will allow teachers and students alike to actually ***be*** listeners.

It is speculated (by Wilber, Neumann, Gebser and others) that human consciousness, in the course of human existence, has gone through several changes, different modes or structures (see Table 1), so to speak, lasting for thousands of years. There are certain features that typify each of these structures or phases of consciousness, making them each different and unique. Consciousness is defined here as a universal experience of interconnectedness that is perceived and experienced at a mass and an individual level. This is different than a sense of individual awareness that is typically referred to as consciousness. Carl Jung's idea of a collective unconscious begins to get at this idea. Based on the definition of communication, the symbols of consciousness

creating, and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, it would follow that each consciousness structure has a different system of communication.

According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language shapes our thinking, perceptions, and doing. Therefore, how an individual thinks about and understands something is how it is. Since communication is an outgrowth of consciousness and language is an outgrowth of communication and since consciousness has had different structures, then it follows that communication, in each of these structures of consciousness, was also different. Ultimately, the world, in each consciousness structure, was perceived and interacted with according to the tenets and guiding principles of that specific consciousness structure. How humankind has thought, perceived, and acted in each structure of consciousness is reflected in communication and language.

Therefore the communication activity that we today refer to as listening was also different in each consciousness phase. The process of listening demands certain skills and abilities not found in every stage of consciousness. To keep the reader from all the trappings that they usually associate with the term listening, attending will be used throughout this paper. It is a more neutral word that will encourage the reader to remember that the process changes with different consciousness structures.

Many scholars, including Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Erich Neumann, Ken Wilber, and Jean Gebser, have proposed this comprehensive overview of consciousness. Perhaps the easiest one to summarize, understand, and apply belongs to Jean Gebser. He has delineated five structures of consciousness: Archaic, Magical, Mythical, Mental/Rational, and Arational/Integral. With each of these structures of consciousness comes a system of

communication suited to the needs of the consciousness. The specifics of each of these communication systems can only be surmised from the descriptions of each consciousness structure and what historical information we have gained from some of them.

Each of these consciousness structures can be typified by increasing levels of complexity and intensity, but not increasing levels of superiority. These shifts were not evolutionary, in the sense that one structure of consciousness did not improve on the previous one. Each transition from one structure to the next is like the paradigm shifts that Thomas Kuhn discusses. Each one was characteristically different than the previous one. It is as if they are grand and glorious experiments in the ways to use and experience individual and universal consciousness, each one providing a new emphasis with different potentials.

As humankind moved from one structure to another they continued to possess vestiges of each of the previous structures. Stored somewhere, perhaps Carl Jung would say in the racial memory or the collective unconscious, is an engram of the potentials developed in each stage of consciousness. This storage system is important because humankind has many latent skills that could be available to them with some increased awareness of the workings of individual consciousness. If these skills could be accessed communication would, most likely, improve. These universal memories are also reflected in the individual stages of human development. As Erich Neumann (1954) explains, "The evolution of consciousness by stages is as much a collective human phenomenon as a particular individual phenomenon. Ontogenetic development may therefore be regarded as a modified recapitulation of phylogenetic development" (p. xx).

People..." were undoubtedly linked through strong pre-linguistic psychic bonds" (Feuerstein, 1987,p. 57). In the Archaic consciousness, speaking and listening were not differentiated or necessary. These people existed in a large "soup" of consciousness, a difficult concept to understand from our contemporary perspective. Due to the conditions of the consciousness structure, the communication system could be labeled as Indiscernible (see Table 1). Because of this structure there was not a need to attend ("listen") since that requires some sense of separateness, therefore this process was Indefinable.

The expulsion from the Garden of Eden can be understood as a metaphor about the first shift in consciousness, from Archaic to MAGICAL. Adam and Eve left the Garden because, in simplest terms, they suddenly had an appreciation of a world separate from them. In a broader sense, human consciousness shifted to an awareness of an objective world as separate from a "body" (but still not a mental) self. In Magical consciousness there was a nascent self-sense. This dawning self-sense, being mostly physical, left a mental connection that was expressed as the clan or family group being part of self. Wilber (1981) explains, "...although the self is distinguished from the naturic environment, it remains magically intermingled with it. The cognitive processes at this stage thus confuse not only subject and object, but whole and part" (p. 41). He continues , "...the (mental) image of the object was not yet fully differentiated from the (physical) object itself--and *that* was the simple most distinguishing characteristic of magical (primary process) cognition: between the object and the symbol of the object existed a magical rapport'" (p. 48-9).

If the ontogenetic and phylogenetic comparisons are used, then this consciousness structure can be related to the child of eight to eighteen months who likes the game peek-a-boo. Children of this age believe that when their eyes are covered they cannot be seen because they cannot see. This is caused because they have not fully differentiated themselves from the other. This" magic" even extends to mirroring adult actions. By doing this they believe that they have the power of adults.

Feuerstein (1987) discusses language in the Magical mode of consciousness as not having, "...been 'invented,' because nature had not yet 'invented' the self-conscious subject" (p. 63). But since there was some, limited subject-object separation, a type of "communication" was necessary. This manifested in the form of symbols. Communication was experienced in cave paintings, nods, hand signals, grunts, clairaudience, and clairvoyance. Each of these types of communication are symbolic processes and require that a symbol system, but not a language, be developed and used. Therefore this communication system could be labeled by its most common characteristic: Intuitive. The most common form of attending ("listening") was telepathic (see Table 1).

In the next consciousness structure, MYTHICAL, an individualized concept of self comes to fruition. Now the individual knows emotion and death as experiences of the individual. This self-sense brings with it a sense of isolation that humankind had never experienced before. Imagination and language developed as a bridge between the perceived inner and outer worlds, as a way to connect and reduce isolation. Imagination "...is the regulative principle behind mythical humanity's relationship to the world and its

own psychic universe....the mythical consciousness simultaneously reaches into itself and beyond itself to the objects of the world" (Feuerstein, 1987, p. 77).

Imagination and language allowed members of this consciousness to step out of this sense of isolation by defining themselves as part of a continuum where they are all are connected from generation to generation with "the Goddess/gods" as their source (Creator Creation). Each one of them could see themselves and each other as part of this continuum thus reducing the impact of the sense of separation. This, then, is a recognition of "history" but not one experienced as in the temporal significance of today but more in the sense of a world of polarities. Instead "history" was viewed as a continuum, using traditions to sustain a link to Creation. "Every type of human action must have its prototype as in the deed of the first ancestors, the heroes of the past, divine Being itself" (Feuerstein, 1987, p. 83).

In the mythic consciousness, language sustains this "sacred" continuum. It supports traditions and

> ...is a way of entering into a mystery relationship with reality. It is both a way to communicate the reality and to construct it. Thus the speaking human individual is at the very center of the universe of mysteries. Through language, or the [oral] symbolization of reality the human being is homologous to the divine Creator, the source of all reality" (p. 83).

Empathy (see Table 1) became possible and necessary with the advent of language and imagination. It characterized the form of attending ("listening") in this consciousness structure because it helped to acknowledge the connections between individuals as points

on this continuum. Imagining the experience of another and then being able to speak of it, reduces the sense of isolation. It also confirms the sacred nature of existence by reinforcing the connection between people and the "historical" continuation.

The Mythical structure of consciousness emerged into what Gebser labeled as the MENTAL/RATIONAL structure. This has been the consciousness of the present age. This is where the ego comes into full-bloom and consciousness becomes aware of consciousness. There is now a perceived separation of mind and body, where the body and anything associated with it, such as emotions, gets disregarded. This mind/body split forces the concept of a continuum with polarities to give way to a world of dichotomies. Since the mind is seen as separate and having supremacy, the concept of causality, a concerted effort to find a relation between things and events or events and events, flourishes. Additionally, the sense of isolation, shunned in the past consciousness structure, is supported and nourished as a desired outcome in this one.

Reason is now the supreme power because it connects cause and effect. Faith is placed in reason rather than God/Goddess.

> " Scientism was the self-liberated ego's bid for omniscience. The rational mind, arrogating to itself the power of divinity, began to laboriously construct its own cosmos out of the chaos, the 'buzzing confusion,' of experience. That cosmos was rational, orderly, symmetrical, causal, deterministic, teleological, meaningful" (p. 121).

The Mental/Rational consciousness seeks an absolute reality, one that can be discussed and measured and where "the truth" can be known. In the quest for reason, logic, and

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absolute reality, time takes on new meaning. Now it, too, is seen as an absolute, existing on its own. It runs on a narrow straight line, like an arrow, from past to future. Time is now something that events are measured against, something that can be killed, wasted, or wisely used.

The orderliness of reason is imposed by invalidating anything not measurable by the experience of the five senses and through dichotomous thinking. Everything is in one category OR the opposite, other category. In this way, variations that might interfere with the system of reason and logic can be ignored or eliminated.

How a well a person living in this consciousness structure controls the external world (everything is viewed as separate from the individual) is the measure of his or her success and personal worth. This requires that unexplained experiences (not of the five senses) must be eliminated to make things controllable. Anything can be controlled as long as the way it operates (the cause and effect) can be explained.

All of this leads to communication being focused on speaking, because the person speaking *appears* to have the control and is generally assumed to be the authority. The communication system reinforces the sense of isolation. Communication is structured in such a way as to support dichotomous thinking. With dichotomous thinking it is easy to experience an external world that can be controlled and an internal world (within the person) that is unpredictable, unexplainable, and either out of the realm of control or within control (at some cost). Because of this, the internal world is not valued (creating a sense of isolation from self) and the focus is on communicating to an external world. Therefore, how the external environment (both personal and global) responds to human

intervention is a yardstick for the effectiveness of communication (as well as power and control). This makes one of the major functions and intents of communication, *control*.

This can been see in the writings of famous rhetoricians of mental-rational consciousness like Aristotle. The whole idea of rhetoric, the way a message is presented, is focused towards speaking (or writing) for the control or management of an audience. Communication is speaker focused not attender ("listener") focused, so the power and control is with a speaker. Since power and control are valued, attending activities do not provide power and control. Attending appears passive and powerless. Therefore the attender doesn't take time to do more than comprehend the message (get the necessary facts), because attending is not valued.

Succinctly, listening (as communication scholars are trying to teach it across the classroom of America) cannot be done in this consciousness. The most that anyone can hope to do is *comprehend*, to gather and make sense of facts. In the act of comprehending, each individual can spend the greatest possible amount of time in power, by **speaking** and thereby controlling the external world. This makes interrupting, being impatient for others to finish speaking, and finishing other's sentences common practice in this consciousness. Simultaneously it allows for critical "comprehending" to flourish because if "flaws" are found in a speaker's message, the "comprehender" becomes "right" and gets the control back.

"Critical comprehending" allows comprehenders to have power. Power comes from how much "air time" the speaker is allowed. If there are flaws found in the speaker's message, then the comprehender can more quickly jump into the conversation as a speaker

to point out these flaws or correct the message. This once again give the comprehender the floor, and by virtue of that the power and control back that they had to relinquish when they stopped to be the comprehender. Generally the comprehender will pay attention to the part of the message that will cause the speaker to yield the floor quickest.

Wolvin and Coakley (1992, p. 12) refer to an informal survey, by Nichols and Stevens, done to determine the accuracy of students' listening abilities at various grade levels. Though ninety percent of the first-graders could explain what a teacher was speaking about when she stopped mid-lecture, only twenty- eight percent of the senior high students could. This would indicate that students become less effective "comprehenders" as they progress through the school system. Could this be explained, by their increasing awareness that the speaker has the authority and power, not the comprehender?

This could also explain why students can take a listening class and very effectively learn about listening, demonstrating all the appropriate behaviors, and yet not be any better listeners. There is no foundation for listening in this consciousness because it is antithetical to this consciousness. So teaching listening in the context of this consciousness is like planting apple trees, fully expecting apples, and getting oranges, instead.

Presently, humankind is once again in transition, in the throes of a shift from mental/rational to ARATIONAL/INTEGRAL consciousness. The shift is happening and has been since before the beginning of this century. It can be seen in the art of the Impressionists and the aperspectival art of Cubism. The physicists discuss relativity and chaos. Philosophers have developed the premises of phenomenology. The mind/body

split is being healed with research into holistic health and psychoneuroimmunology. Music is being restructured in the atonal style of Hindemith and Stravinsky. Politically the Iron Curtain has fallen and the world is working in harmony to end world-wide and localized skirmishes. Listening is taught as a focus of communication studies and customer service.

How will this new consciousness affect humankind? Several guesses can be made. Wilber (1981) says the new consciousness will be *trans-egoic* as opposed to most of humankind's existence being *pre-egoic*. "Acategorial seeing or perceiving...is possible when the fixed point of the ego, as the center of all perspectival perception and thought is transcended" (Feuerstein, 1987, p. 133).

People will shift their attention to intrapersonal processes such as emotions and the skills of meditation. Time will become a tool of consciousness in which individuals will operate with a sense a freedom, not with a sense of competition. There will be a reconnection with the body; it will be trusted as an accurate barometer of an individual's total health. Here is the picture Wilber (1987, p.325) painted. The Arational/Integral consciousness:

> "...will mean a society of men and women who, by virtue of an initial glimpse into transcendence: will start to understand vividly their common humanity and brother/sisterhood; will transcend roles based on bodily differences of skin color and sex; will grow in mental-psychic clarity; will make policy decisions on the basis of intuition as well as rationality; will see the same Consciousness in each and every soul, indeed, in all creation, and will start to act correspondingly; will find mental-psychic

> consciousness to be transfigurative of body physiology, and adjust medical theory accordingly; will find higher motivations in men and women that will drastically alter economic incentives and economic theory; will understand psychological growth as evolutionary transcendence, and develop methods and institutions not just to cure emotional disease but foster the growth of consciousness; will see education as a discipline in transcendence, body to mind to soul, and regear educational theory and institutions accordingly, with special emphasis on hierarchic development; will find technology an appropriate aid to transcendence, not a replacement for it...will see outer space as not just an inert entity out there but also as a projection of inner or psychic spaces, and explore it accordingly...will see cultural-national differences as perfectly acceptable and desirable, but will set those differences on a background of universal and common consciousness... will view all people as ultimately one in Spirit, but only potentially one in Spirit, and thus provide incentives for each individual to actualize that Spirit...will realize that politicians, if they are to govern all aspects of life, will have to demonstrate an understanding and mastery of all aspects of life--body to mind to soul to spirit...

What does that mean for communication specifically? In the name, arational/integral the word integral refers to the ability of humankind to be able to access all those stored memories, therefore more communication tools will be available. This new consciousness will require an individual to experience a personal paradigm shift, to go

inside and *know* the other's communication by knowing themselves. It will require them to think and speak in some other way than dichotomously. It will require them to seek the similarities in others and, as a result, recognize diversity NOT differences. The purpose of communication will be to connect with (not control) others and find the agreement and harmony in varied perspectives. (Table 1).

More specifically what does it mean for the task of listening? First, it means that the tools to be effective listeners will be available and since the emphasis is not on controlling but connecting listeners will come into their own right. Communication will stop being listener focused. Listeners will feel personally empowered, and therefore, discover a willingness to listen and pleasure in listening. In addition, with a shift in consciousness, it means that the skills taught in listening classes, now have a place to belong. Students will find a reason not to interrupt or finish sentences. It means focusing on intrapersonal processes, learning to trust intuition, and teaching students a non-judgmental attitude. It means, not walking in the shoes of another, but realizing, as one student said, "'we are doing well if we can get one of our shoes off and one of their shoes on'" (Borisoff, Purdy, 1991, p. 47). And that, in fact, we must get one of their shoes on yet not forget what it feels like to wear one of our own.

For communication scholars (remembering the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language and communication structures how reality is experienced), it means starting today to discover what communication is and how it is done in the structure of this new paradigm. It means throwing their hats into the ring, joining the philosophers, artist, musicians, and physicists as messengers of this evolving consciousness. It means instead

of teaching communication as it has been done, it is time to discover and teach communication (and listening) as it *will be* done.

Table 1 - Structures of Consciousness and Communication

Types of Conscious -ness	Archaic	Magical	Mythical	Mental/ Rational	Arational/ Integral
→ →	→ →	Increasing	Complexity	→ →	→ →
Characteris-tics	egolessness	clan or family as self	self-sense	ego	"trans-egoic"
	conscious-ness soup	subject/ object magically intertwined	continuum and polarities	dichotomies	aperspectival
	time did not exist	time is the moment	time as a sacred connection	time as absolute	time has flexibility
			imagination	faith in reason	intrapersonal awareness
Characteris-tics of Communica-tion	simultaneous knowing	symbols	language	communi-cate to control	communi-cate to connect
	psychic bond	clairaudience		focus on speaking	listening empowers
		clairvoyance			
Communica-tion System or Framework	Indiscernible	Intuitive	Traditional	External	Source
Attending ("listening") Form	indefinable	telepathic	empathic	compre-hending	listening

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